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CLASS NOTES

TEACHING KIDS ABOUT DOLLARS AND SENSE

WHEN IT COMES TO financial literacy, U.S. students typically score an F. Now a for-profit drama group is trying to remedy the problem. The **National Theatre for Children** (NTC) is performing 45-minute shows in New York for middle-school students, using sketch comedy to teach saving, budgeting, and credit.

The Mad About Money program started on Sept. 28 and, with **Citibank** as an initial

sponsor, plans to reach 1,000 schools. The NTC has previously created shows on nutrition, energy conservation, and the environment.

Finance may prove a tougher sell, however. Lewis Mandell, a finance professor at the **State University of New York at Buffalo**, was hired by the NTC to evaluate the impact of its new presentation. Mandell oversees a biennial survey

of financial literacy among high school seniors. In the 2004 survey, 65% failed a personal finance test. By targeting younger kids, Mandell hopes this show won't bomb. —Mark Walsh

